

VZCZCXRO8431
PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHDO #0689 3291118
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 251118Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9532
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T DOHA 000689

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDRESSEE ADDED

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES QARADAWI WITH MFA MINISTER OF
STATE AL-MAHMOUD; GOQ TO PROVIDE WRITTEN RESPONSE TO
TREASURY LETTER

REF: STATE 12027

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(S) KEY POINTS

-- Ambassador discussed November 24 the letter to MFA
Minister of State Ahmed Al-Mahmoud from Treasury U/S Levey on
Yousef Al-Qaradawi's support for Hamas. The Ambassador
underscored the portion of the letter noting the risks posed
by Qaradawi's actions to the Qatar Islamic Bank and Qatar's
financial sector. Ambassador strongly encouraged the GOQ to
explore ways to separate Qaradawi from Qatar's financial
sector, citing Qaradawi's highly public, regional role in
support of Hamas, an organization, he pointed out, that not
just the United States but others have determined to be a
terrorist organization.

-- Al-Mahmoud, stating that Qaradawi "is not working as a
terrorist," drew a distinction between censuring Qaradawi for
his opinions (something Qatar cannot do) and sending "the
wrong message on financial standards."

(S) COMMENTS

-- Al-Mahmoud made the point that Qaradawi is not the only
member of the board that takes decisions on zakat.

-- Al-Mahmoud said he would find out the number of persons
on the board and pass that information to the Embassy or as
part of his reply to Levy.

End Key Points and Comments.

[11](#). (S) Ambassador delivered November 24 to Minister of State
for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud reftel letter from U/S
Levey. Ambassador noted that the letter follows up on an
October conversation that Al-Mahmoud and U/S Levey had in
Washington on the relationship of Yousef Al-Qaradawi with
Qatar's banking sector in the context of monetary transfers
in support of Hamas. Al-Mahmoud read the letter carefully
before responding that he would "write a response" after GOQ
coordination.

[12](#). (S) Al-Mahmoud took issue with one point of the letter.
"In our opinion, Qaradawi is not supporting terrorism."
Qatar "cannot censure Qaradawi's opinions. As a friend, I
tell you that we cannot regard him as a terrorist."

[13](#). (S) Ambassador highlighted for Al-Mahmoud the text of the
letter that reads "Al-Qaradawi's public support for

Hamas...poses a risk both to the bank (Note: Qatar Islamic Bank) and to the Qatari financial sector as a whole." Al-Mahmoud took the point, responding that Qatar did not want to send "the wrong message on financial standards." Ambassador strongly encouraged the GOQ to explore ways to separate Qaradawi from Qatar's financial sector, citing Qaradawi's highly public, regional role in supporting Hamas, an organization not just the United States but others have determined to be a terrorist organization.

¶4. (S) Al-Mahmoud understood the point and said that the GOQ will study U/S Levey's letter and perhaps discuss elements of it directly with U/S Levey.

¶5. (S) Thinking aloud, Al-Mahmoud asked, "Did Qaradawi transfer money, or did he just offer opinions? These are different issues. Qaradawi is not working as a terrorist." Al-Mahmoud added that Qatar is cooperating with the U.S. on shoring up its banking standards and wants a strong financial system.

¶6. (S) Al-Mahmoud pointed to the text where it says, "Although he may lack direct control over normal business operations," and opined that Treasury itself acknowledges that statements and banking oversight as exercised by Qaradawi are different in nature. Al-Mahmoud acknowledged that Qaradawi is the chairman of the Sharia Advisory Board on the collection and distribution of zakat funds, but underscored that there are at least two other board members.

LeBaron